GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6357
ANSWERED ON:08.05.2002
REPRESENTATION AGAINST HIKE IN PASSPORT FEE
VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the recent hike in passport registration fee has adversely affected a large number of people in the country ;

(b) if so, whether the Government have received any representations for withdrawing or decreasing the registration fee ; and

(c) if so, the steps the Government propose to take in this regard ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a) & (b) The Government have received representations for withdrawing or reducing the recent increase in the passport fee.

(c) The Government does not propose to review the enhancement in the passport fees in view of the following :

1. The passport fee was last fixed in 1993 and the cost of issuing a passport has gone up considerably.

2. Rapid changes have taken place in technology and the passport booklet has been made more secure and tamperproof with many new security features added over a period of time. Machine writing of passports has commenced in a phased manner and comprehensive computerisation of all the passport offices is underway. These are all capital intensive activities.

3. Decentralisation of passport services is a major initiative taken by the Government and it will be possible for the applicants to submit the application for a passport at the District level. State Governments are being compensated for the expenditure incurred by them on implementing the decentralisation proposal.